

Excerpted from her remarks at the 8/6/2015 Judicial Council Meeting

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

This quote from Helen Keller sums up our efforts working together within the AOC to serve you since our last meeting.

Good teamwork is an essential element of providing high quality and reliable services to the judiciary.

As a shining example of good teamwork, starting last fall, our staff worked behind the scenes to provide the probate court judges with legal research, forms, assistance with the press inquiries, talking points, and meeting support as the judges prepared for the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage. As you know, the Probate Court Judges successfully embraced the new law without any significant negative press. Many thanks to the outstanding leadership of Council President Don Wilkes and Judge Chase Daughtrey, who worked around the clock with our staff to successfully get out in front of this new law.



Another example of good teamwork was our recent collaboration with executive branch leaders and judges in order to achieve a seamless transfer on July 1 of staff and responsibilities associated with accountability courts, the Commission on Family Violence, and CMPAC, the agency regulating misdemeanor probation companies and programs in Georgia. To further assist with the Council of Accountability Courts Judges, the AOC has signed a MOU toward that goal with the Council's newly elected chair.

During the first week of August, we worked internally as a team to complete our negotiations on a mutually beneficial agreement with the Georgia Department of Revenue in order to fulfill our legal responsibility of collecting debts owed to courts.

How did we accomplish all this? Through great teamwork and a laser-beam focus on delivering excellent service to the judiciary.

In my role of interim director, I have continued to shuffle staff around to create teams to ensure service. For example, effective July 1, Mike Cuccaro was promoted to work alongside Jorge Basto in focusing on the delivery of innovative technology initiatives important to our clients. Former Juvenile Court Judge Jerry Bruce is now working for the AOC to help us launch the juvenile court data exchange effort alongside the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and Department of Juvenile Justice.

We quietly launched a new AOC website. This website was in production for over 2 years, but

Michelle Barclay wrapped it up with Mike Cuccaro and others in IT, and drove it to production. I think you will find that this website is clear and easy to use.

Tracy Mason is our newest Assistant Director. Tracy stepped up to lead our support services to the Judicial Council as well oversee our day to day support of the councils of probate, magistrate and municipal court judges. She is also spearheading our legislative efforts this year.

Attorney Catherine Fitch with our office will be serving as the inaugural Executive Director of the Council of Probate Court Judges to ensure that this council receives the dedicated staff services they need.

Our Fiscal team, led by Randy Dennis monitors approximately \$26 million dollars which is a combination of federal, state and private funds, as well as fees. They successfully closed out our fiscal year and worked alongside other judicial branch staff to ensure that their fiscal years' ended just as well.

Our Research and Regulatory staff, overseen by Christopher Hansard, is continuing to work with the Judicial Council Court Reporting Matters Committee to complete a "Guide to Producing Official Court Records" which will be posted on the AOC's website once it is completed.

Our Research team also completed its work with the Fulton County Family Division Task Force, whose reports will be published soon.

In closing, at the last Judicial Council meeting I stated that we were working as an agency to earn your trust and your confidence in our professional services.

The AOC is a service agency. We are staff to the policy making body – you, the members of the Judicial Council. The work we do here in Atlanta continues to touch every court, every city, every corner of our state in one way or another.

It is an honor to lead such an accomplished and dedicated group of professionals in the AOC. I continue to look forward to hearing how we can serve all of you better in the future.□